(i) Customer opting for mobile connection of BSNL.

(ii) Surrendering of second and above landline connection in view of availability of broadband connection for internet connectivity.

(iii) Customer opting for mobile/basic telephone of private operator.

(c) To retain and sustain its customers, BSNL has introduced many schemes at competitive rates for fixed telephones and Wireless in Local Loop (WLL) connections considering the requirements of customers and prevailing market conditions from time to time. The rates offered by BSNL are competitive and affordable to the customers. BSNL has taken following steps:

(i) Reduction in tariff for all basic services.

(ii) Launch of BSNL ONE INDIA tariff scheme with effect from 01-03-2006.

(iii) Reduction in rentals for Sulabh Plan with effect from 01-10-2006.

(iv) Empowering Chief General Managers (CGMs) of Telecom Circles to launch Circle based competitive tariffs for basic and cellular services to face competition effectively.

Internet connectivity to common man

2585. SHRI S. ANBALAGAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government maintain any statistics regarding the number of household Internet users in the country;

(b) if so, the number of household Internet users as on December 31, 2006 of each of the last three years;

(c) whether it is a fact that our country lags behind countries like China in number of household Internet users mainly due to high cost of Internet connectivity; and

(d) if so, the steps proposed to be taken by Government to make Internet connectivity affordable to common man particularly to middle and lower middle class families?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) and

(b) Department of Telecommunications does not collect data pertaining specifically to household Internet users in the country. However, total number of all types of Internet subscribers in the country as on December 31, 2006 was 86.1 lakh.

(c) and (d) Do not arise in view of (a) and (b) above.

Rapid expansion of telecom sector

2586. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL:
SHRI DARA SINGH:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India has become the third largest telecommunication network in the world after China and USA;

(b) the total number of telephones provided in the country as on January 31, 2006 as against the number of telephones required till March 2007, both in rural and urban areas;

(c) whether it is also a fact that on an average addition in number of telephone subscribers is reportedly more than two lakhs a day; and

(d) if so, whether rapid expansion of telecom sector would be able to maintain its pace to meet the growing demand as a whole in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Yes, Sir. India has become the third-largest telecommunication network in the world after China and USA.

(b) The total number of telephones in the country as on January 31, 2006 were 130.91 million as against the target of 250 million telephones by December 31, 2007 both in rural and urban areas together. As on March 2007, the total telephones are 206.83 million.

(c) Yes, Sir. On an average approximately 6.00 million telephone subscribers are added each month, which is equivalent to addition of around 2.00 lakh subscribers per day.

(d) Yes, Sir.